

2008 Session Preview

34th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Ferries

Families in the 34th District rely on good ferry service, especially to and from Vashon Island.

Nobody relies on ferries more than Vashon residents, who have had to operate without two boats while repairs are being done.

For years, I've worked with other law-makers, the governor and the Department of Transportation on ways to improve ferry service.

This is important, and not just to our district. Washington state has the busiest ferry system in the nation.

The new head of Transportation – Paula Hammond – is taking quick action to cut through red tape and get things done for ferry passengers. I appreciate how she's tackling these tough problems and I'll keep working on ways to get things done for people who rely on our ferries.



Rep. Eileen Cody

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34th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Winter 2008



Dear neighbors,

It's an honor and a privilege to serve as your representative. Thank you.

We now have a new representative (Sharon Nelson) and a new senator (former Rep. Joe McDermott) here in the 34th District. I look forward to working with them both during the 2008 session.

I believe that keeping you informed – and listening to you – are two big parts of my job. This newsletter is my chance to tell you about issues coming up in the 2008 session.

This newsletter isn't big enough to talk about every issue that will come up. We'll consider up to 3,000 different pieces of legislation.

For this newsletter, I'd like to focus on health care and ferries:

- We already spend quite a bit on health care. How can we better use that money to make sure our citizens actually are healthier?
- Washington state relies on ferries more than any other state in the nation. What's the best way to replace dangerous old ships while keeping ferry fares affordable?

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I hope you find the information useful. If you have a question or comment about any issue, just contact my office. You can reach me by phone, e-mail or regular mail.

Sincerely yours,

Eileen Cody

Rep. Eileen Cody
D-West Seattle
Chair, Health Care and Wellness



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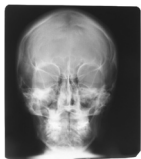
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Better health care for all



Our goals

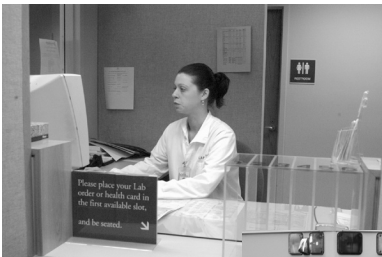
I know there’s nothing more precious than your family’s good health.

As chair of Health Care and Wellness, I focus my time and energy on finding ways to improve health care in Washington state.

The problem isn’t a lack of money. Every year, we’re spending more and more on health care. The problem is how we spend that money. We can do better.

I believe:

- Every person in Washington state – rich or poor – should have health care. We’re almost there with children.
- Every family deserves a family doctor.
- Every patient and doctor should wrestle with less paperwork.
- Every person in our state should not just have health coverage, but access to health care so that good health is maintained.



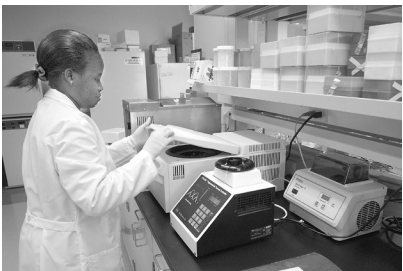
Action now

Some politicians say we can’t truly change health care until there’s a national solution. That health care is too big and complicated for our state to move forward without serious reform from the White House and Congress.

That’s only partially true. We do need changes at the federal level before we can have comprehensive reform, but in the meantime, we cannot sit by and let Washingtonians get sicker while we wait for the feds to act.

In the past few years, we’ve made great strides to improve health care.

- We made it Washington state’s policy to cover all kids by 2012, and we’re on track to reach that goal. More than 84,000 children got health coverage because of this effort.
- Washington state is now ranked the 12th healthiest state in the nation, up from 15th.
- Citizens are paying less for prescription medicines, with 70,000 people signing up for the state’s prescription discount card. If you need help, visit www.rx.wa.gov or call (206) 521-2027
- We saved taxpayers \$192 million by slowing the growth in health care costs for state workers from 11 percent in 2005 to just 3 percent in 2008.



Every family deserves a family doctor

The next challenge is making sure every worker can get affordable health care for their family.

Our state’s goal is to cover all adults by 2010.

A big part of reaching that goal is the Health Insurance Partnership (HIP), which is a public-private partnership designed to bring more affordable health coverage to workers.

It’s a myth that people who don’t have health coverage are unemployed. Most adults without health care actually have a job — they work at a small business or do seasonal work like construction. Some have two jobs.

The partnership is designed to cover these workers. It saves money by providing a mechanism to combine worker, business and government funds.

When fully implemented, workers will be able to choose the health plan that’s right for their family — and if they change jobs, they won’t lose their health care.

This reform passed in 2007 and is starting up. For the 2008 session, I’ll work on improving the Partnership and providing the subsidies for small businesses. It saves taxpayers money when workers and their families have health coverage, because that means they aren’t forced to get health care from our hospital’s emergency rooms — driving up costs for everybody.

I’m proud that we passed this bipartisan plan and I’m excited to see the Partnership go to work to give more people affordable health care.

Patient safety

You’ve probably seen the newspaper and TV reports about people catching drug-resistant skin infections. With more people taking antibiotics, hospitals are seeing more germs like staph that have built up resistance to the medicines we rely upon.

Medication errors are also a big problem. Modern medicine means the latest prescription drugs, and these are powerful medicines that can interact in dangerous ways.

To improve patient safety, Gov. Chris Gregoire proposes that we:

- Start a new statewide database to prevent medication errors, so doctors and pharmacists can see what drugs a patient is already taking and improve their care and prevent bad combinations that can cause illness or death.
- Give citizens information about hospital accidents and mistakes. The more patients know, the better choices they can make — and the better hospitals can do to prevent problems.
- Do criminal background checks on anyone who applies to be a health care provider, and double-check on the credentials of health care professionals moving here from another state.
- Train more qualified nurses to fix the shortage at our hospitals.

